

Message Text

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ACTION IO-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 ARA-06 EA-07 EUR-12 NEA-10 AID-05

ACDA-05 AGR-05 CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 CIEP-01

OFA-01 COME-00 DLOS-04 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 EPA-01

ERDA-05 FMC-01 TRSE-00 H-02 INR-07 INT-05 JUSE-00

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 NSF-01 OES-03 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAL-01 FEA-01 /148 W

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R 050915Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8234

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 0410

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, UN, DM

SUBJ: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS: BENIN

REF STATE 37591,

1. THE FOLLOWING IS EMBASSY'S REPLY TO REQUEST FOR INFO ON BENIN'S MULTILATERAL INTERESTS AND METHODS OF DECISION MAKING AND IMPLEMENTATION. REPLIES ARE KEYED TO LETTERED PARAGRAPHS OF QUESTIONNAIRE (PARA 7 REFTEL).

2. (A) BASIC TO BENIN'S INTERESTS IN MULTILATERAL ISSUES IS ITS DESIRE TO BE IN THE VANGUARD OF THE RADICAL THIRD WORLD GROUP AND THEIR PRESENT POSITION IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL WILL BE USED TO PROVE THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE CAUSES AND POSITIONS ESPOUSED BY THIS GROUP. BENIN HAS NO MULTILATERAL INTERESTS EXCLUSIVE OF THOSE BEING PROMOTED BY THE COMMUNIST BLOC AND THE RADICAL ARAB-AFRICAN STATES. IT CAN BE COUNTED ON TO PUSH THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER AND TO FAIL TO GIVE RECOGNITION TO POSITIVE STEPS TAKEN BY THE US IN THIS AREA.

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IT WILL BE VOCAL ON SOUTHERN AFRICA WHERE IT PICTURES THE US AS A LEADING ALLY OF THE "RACIST" REGIMES.

(B) BENIN'S MULTILATERAL POLICY-MAKING IS HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY COMMUNIST COUNTRIES AND CERTAIN THIRD WORLD RADICALS. NORTH KOREA, ALGERIA, AND TO A SLIGHTLY LESSER DEGREE, GUINEA, TOP THIS LIST. NORTH KOREA REPORTEDLY HAS A NUMBER OF ADVISORS AVAILABLE AT ITS EMBASSY IN COTONOU READY TO COUNSEL THE BENINESE UPON REQUEST. THERE IS A STEADY STREAM OF BENINESE POLITICIANS AND CIVIL SERVANTS CALLING AT THE NORTH KOREAN EMBASSY. WE CAN ONLY PRESUME THAT THIS FREE COUNSELLING SERVICE EXTENDS TO THE AREA OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. BENIN NEITHER HAS NOR DOES IT TRY TO EXERT INFLUENCE ON OTHER COUNTRIES.

(C) THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT THE BENINESE DELEGATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS (PARTICULARLY TO THE UN) ARE NOT FULLY INSTRUCTED. THEY ARE PROBABLY GIVEN BASIC GUIDELINES AND WHERE THESE DO NOT SUFFICIENTLY COVER SPECIFIC ISSUES, TAKE THEIR CUES FROM THOSE COUNTRIES MENTIONED IN (B) ABOVE. ON OCCASION, FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS HAVE, IN RESPONSE TO US DEMARCHES ON SPECIFIC ISSUES, CLAIMED THAT THEY CAN ONLY INSTRUCT THEIR DELEGATION WHEN THE LATTER SPECIFICALLY REQUESTS THEM TO DO SO. MINISTRY ALSO CLAIMS THAT ANY INSTRUCTIONS TO ITS DELEGATIONS BE APPROVED BY THE POLITICAL BUREAU (SYNONYMOUS WITH THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY OF BENIN). REPORTING FROM THE DELEGATIONS IS APPARENTLY SLOW AND SPARSE. WE HAVE FOUND THE FOREIGN MINISTRY UNINFORMED ABOUT STATEMENTS OR POSITIONS TAKEN BY ITS DELEGATIONS SEVERAL DAYS AFTER THE FACT.

(D) BENIN'S AMB TO THE UN DOES NOT HAVE INDEPENDENT POLITICAL POWER. HOWEVER, AS A REVOLUTIONARY OF LONGSTANDING, HE HAS FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THOSE WHO ARE NOW THE MOST INFLUENTIAL CIVILIAN MEMBERS OF THE PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND THE POLITBUREAU. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT HE COULD USE THESE CONTACTS TO CIRCUMVENT THE MINISTRY, BUT SINCE THE FOREIGN MINISTRY IS SUCH A WEAK ORGANIZATION IT WOULD HARDLY BE NECESSARY BE NECESSARY. THE AMB HAS NEVER HELD A PRIOR DIPLOMATIC POST.

(E) THE BENINESE GOVT IS NOT IN THE LEAST RECEPTIVE TO US
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REPRESENTATIONS ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES. WHILE MINISTRY OFFICIALS LISTEN POLITELY TO OUR DEMARCHES, THEY ARE RARELY ENGAGE IN A DIALOGUE ON THE ISSUES. WE SUSPECT THAT OFTEN OUR DEMARCHES DIE WITH THE MINISTRY OFFICIAL UPON WHOM THEY ARE MADE. BENIN USUALLY HAS ITS PRE-CONCEIVED IDEOLOGICALLY BASED POSITION AND IS NOT INTERESTED IN HEARING AN OPPOSING POINT OF VIEW. UP TO NOW THE GPRB HAS NOT ACCEPTED THE CONCEPT THAT MULTILATERAL ISSUES ARE PART OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. WE HAVE SPENT MONTHS IN AN EFFORT TO PERSUADE THE BENINESE GOVT THAT RECKLESS TALK AND ACTION IN

INTERNATIONAL FORA ARE DETRIMENTAL TO BILATERAL RELATIONS.
THE RECENT CRISIS IN OUR RELATIONSHIP MAY FINALLY OPEN ITS
EYES. BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH US AND WESTERN EUROPEAN GOVTS
ARE CONCEIVED BY THE BENINESE GOVT SOLELY IN TERMS OF AID
GRANTED. THE GPRB WOULD NEVER THINK OF SOLICITING USG SUPPORT
FOR ITS POSITION IN MULTILATERAL MATTERS. MINISTRY
OFFICALS WOULD OFTEN EVEN REFUSE TO DIVULGE THE POSITION TO BE
TAKEN BY BENIN IN DIRECT CONVERSATIONS WITH THE EMBASSY.
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